

BIENNIAL SOUTHWEST

September 28- November 30, 2008

Teacher's Guide

The Albuquerque Museum of Art & History

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Biennial Southwest 08 is a juried exhibition of contemporary works from artists in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Included are 83 works by 65 artists that explore a variety of techniques, materials, and subject matter.

ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide was designed to assist teachers in exploring the exhibition, *Biennial Southwest 08* with your students. Included are lessons exploring select works both for the classroom and museum, full color inserts of the images discussed, and teacher background materials.

The guide was developed to address standards in visual and language arts for high school students, however teachers in lower grades will find the images and lessons can be adapted to their grade levels. A list of the standards addressed in these lessons is included as a separate page with this guide.

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TEACHER BACKGROUND: ARTIST STATEMENTS

Jonathan Blaustein

I'm interested in the way photography is used to deceive. Millions, if not billions of advertising dollars are spent annually photographing food and obfuscating reality. Fast food conglomerates are certainly the worst culprits, but everywhere we see glamorized versions of what we eat like so much lipstick slapped upon the pig. Food is clearly a potent symbol of wealth, power, health, and globalization for the 21st century. Its value is determined by the price of oil, its transnational transport contributes to global warming, its ingredients entice America into obesity, and its production processes animals into floss and mush. The photographs in this project attempt to strip back the artifice, to depict food items as they were sold (minus packaging) without styling, retouching, or artificial lighting. Each image represents a dollar's worth of food purchased from various markets in New Mexico. The subjects exist as equivalent amounts of commodity and nothing more.

William Cannings

It is through the pursuit of making that I define myself. I use process to connect with concept. Place. What is place? As an immigrant I am sensitive to the question. In physical and conceptual modulations I create a hyper-reality of non-place. I find this a transitory place of material and mind. I am lured to the visceral quality of inflated objects: the look, feel, and smell. I remember as a child bouncing on a "space-hopper," a day-glow orange toy with the fresh scent of rubber and vinyl. Inflatable objects from playthings to architectural structures have exposed me to new kinds of experiences. I enjoy the interaction of squeezing, pushing, pulling and being absorbed. It permits a tangible, physical awareness of self and environment. Inflated objects have become one symbol of popular culture: cheap, disposable, fun, fleeting, iconic, and sometimes frivolous and distasteful.

Nicholas Naughton

I'm interested in the way we formulate ideas while living within a world of edited information. How do we formulate our opinions in a media saturated environment? How do we evaluate our faith in knowledge? My current work considers the issue of immigration in the western world. Stemming from research on border issues in the southwestern United States, these works both acknowledge and deny the identities of the people working on the fringes of our society. Drawing from the multifarious history of the border issue and from firsthand experience, I hope to draw attention to this underclass of people and the daily lives they endure. I question the sources from which we inform ourselves about them, confronting our beliefs and opinions. Do we defend our viewpoint because we have faith that it is sound or because we hesitate to disrupt the fabric of our world with uncomfortable truths?

Margi Weir

My work of the past few years has been called an art of protest. However, I think of it more as an art of consciousness, of bearing witness to the world around me. Advancement (or, more accurately, the struggle to advance), frustration, and repetition are the recurring themes of my new work. In the visual culture of the 21st century, we are bombarded by repeated images until they become a pattern of visual noise. By using a computer, I repeat images in order to make an appealing visual pattern that has an underlying darker meaning. In *Tapestry of Flight*, man's attempts to advance and to rival winged creatures ends up with rockets pointing both at the sky and at earth, leaving us with the question: "How advanced have we really become?"

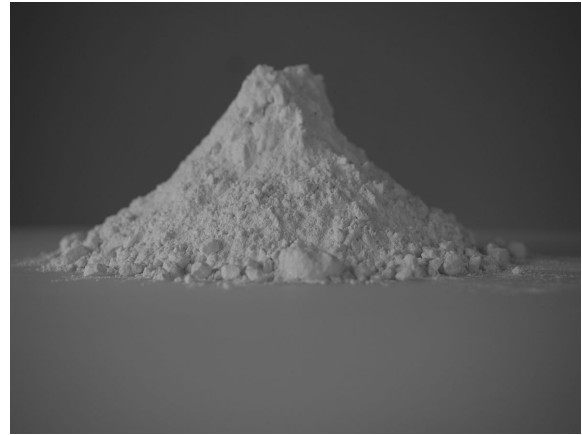
ACTIVITY: ART AS IDEA

OBJECTIVE

Students will analyze artwork to determine what contemporary ideas are being conveyed and create their own work exploring their ideas.

DESCRIPTION

Artists use a variety of methods and materials to convey a message about what is happening in our world. With works which address the issues of media and advertising, artists often use the same techniques they are critiquing to convey their ideas. Examine the methods artists use to convey their ideas.



Jonathan Blaustein
Arroyo Seco, NM
One Dollar's Worth of Shurfine Flour
Archival pigment print
30 x 40 inches

WARM UP

Have students discuss what makes a work of art, a work of art? Is it subject matter, aesthetics, the purpose of the work? What are the parameters, if any?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Give students time to view the image, *One Dollar's Worth of Shurfine Flour* by Jonathan Blaustein. Have the class discuss why the artist chose this subject to photograph. Does the photograph exhibit good design? Why would the artist elevate such a common item to a fine art photograph? Ask them to brainstorm what ideas the artist is trying to convey in this work.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Read the enclosed artist statement from Jonathan Blaustein. Facilitate a class discussion about advertising and its role in glamorizing food. Then have students look through magazines for food advertisements. Compare and discuss the works by advertisers and those of the artist. What are the similarities and the differences between the two? Now, ask the students to choose other subjects from ads to analyze, then have them create an original piece satirizing their chosen subject.

IN THE MUSEUM

Have students explore additional artwork in the exhibition, *Biennial Southwest 08* that focuses on communicating ideas. Here are some suggestions for exploring the concept of art to express ideas:

Denis Gillingwater, *Monuments/Markers/Measures*

H.Y. Russell, *Counting*

Sara Magnuson, *Houses*

ACTIVITY: DEPICTING THE SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

OBJECTIVE

Students will consider how artists depict their social environment through the qualities of their artwork and document their own creative process in depicting their environment.

DESCRIPTION

How does the choice of materials affect the ideas an artist is trying to convey? How do sensory qualities invoke emotions and memories of things in our environment? Consider the ways an artist uses the qualities of their artwork to reflect their environment.

WARM UP

Have a variety of objects made from different materials on hand. Discuss as a class the qualities of these objects.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Examine the image *Comfort* by William Cannings. Engage students in a discussion of the qualities of this sculpture. Brainstorm associations to the artwork. Does this sculpture remind them of objects from their own experiences? What emotions and memories come to mind when they think about those objects?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Students conduct research and choose a subject from popular culture as inspiration for their own artwork. Ask them to keep a journal exploring their process. What qualities does it possess? How can they reflect these qualities in their own artwork?

IN THE MUSEUM

Explore other works in the exhibition *Biennial Southwest 08* whose qualities reflect their social environment. Suggested works include:

David Polka, *Horrors and Untitled*

Denis Gillingwater, *Monuments/Markers/Measures*

Michael Mulno, *Untitled*, from “Young People,” 2007

William Cannings
Lubbock, TX
Comfort
Steel and paint
38 x 44 x 72 inches



ACTIVITY: ART OF CONSCIOUSNESS

OBJECTIVE

Students will reflect upon artwork created to raise awareness of social issues and examine issues important to them.

DESCRIPTION

Throughout the centuries, art has been used as a platform to raise awareness of social issues. As knowledge of our world expands, many contemporary artists explore the intersection of politics in our lives. Examine the issues of the day raised by contemporary artists.

WARM UP

Explore the tradition of consciousness- raising in art history. Some examples include: *The Third of May 1808* by Francisco Goya, *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso and *Migrant Mother* by Dorothea Lange.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Give the students time to explore *Tapestry of Flight* by Margi Weir. What imagery can they identify in this work? Why has the artist chosen to repeat the images? Can they make connections between the objects? What issue is the artist bringing to our attention?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Facilitate a class discussion of social issues that are important to the students. Students should then research their issues thoroughly. Brainstorm what materials and techniques are best for raising awareness of their issues.

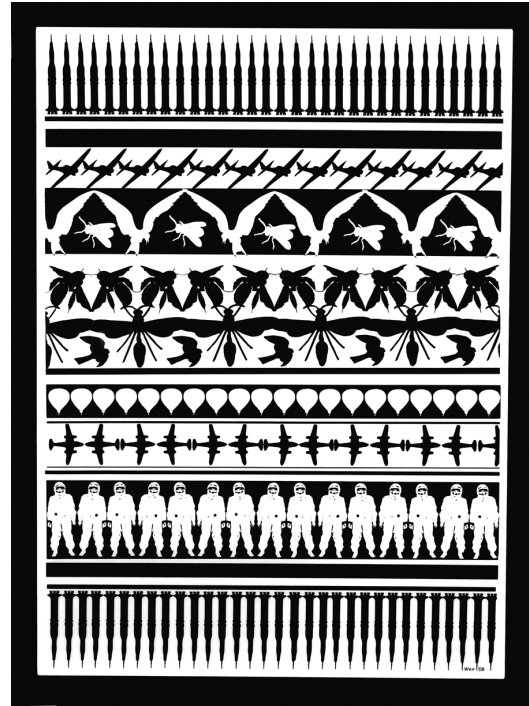
IN THE MUSEUM

Explore other works in the *Biennial Southwest 08* exhibit which attempt to raise awareness about social issues. Identify what their concerns are and how their work attempts to raise awareness of these issues. Suggested works include

Sara Magnuson, *Houses*

Nicholas Naughton, *El Trabajador #1 & #2*

Leigh Ann Lester, *Poteadiadipsalisntilntumacusmala....*



Margi Weir
Placitas, NM
Tapestry of Flight
Vinyl, resin on komacel
48 x 36 inches

ACTIVITY: ART AND CULTURE

OBJECTIVE

Students will analyze the cultural context of artwork and create their own artwork in response to the issues.

DESCRIPTION

How do we form our ideas about ourselves and others? Many artists working today question these commonly held assumptions. Explore the ways that artists engage us to question these assumptions.

WARM UP

Facilitate a discussion on the issue of immigration in our society. What are the major issues and ideas involved in the immigration debate? Where do students get the information to form their opinions?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Have students view the images, *El Trabajador #1 & #2* by Nicholas Naughton. What is the artist trying to convey with the larger than life images? What is the effect of the artist's technique?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Have students research the issue of immigration. Explore the historical roots of the debate and the cultural context of the issues. In response to their research, students create their own artwork exploring the issue.

IN THE MUSEUM

Naughton's work also addresses the idea of a sub-culture of immigrant workers who work on the fringes of our society. Compare and contrast Naughton's work with that of Michael Mulno's, *Untitled*, from "Young People," 2007, which address the youth sub-culture. What are the similarities and differences in their approaches to the subject matter? What do these sub-cultures have in common with one another? How do they differ?



Nicholas Naughton
Las Cruces, NM
El Trabajador #1
Woodcut on MM1 paper
96 x 48 inches

El Trabajador #2
Woodcut on MM1 paper
96 x 48 inches

COMING NEXT:

*Jamestown Quebec and Santa Fe:
Three North American Beginnings*
October 26, 2008-March 29, 2009

Gary Erbe: 40 Year Retrospective
December 21, 2008-February 15, 2009

For tours of our exhibitions, contact Theresa Sedillo
at 505-243-7255. Tours for groups K-12 booked
at least two weeks in advance are free.

For recorded information about upcoming exhibits
and events call 505-242-4600

The Albuquerque Museum OF ART AND HISTORY

19th and Mountain Road NW (In Old Town)
505-243-7255 or 311 • Relay NM or 711 •
www.cabq.gov/museum



The Albuquerque Museum is
a Division of the Cultural
Services Department of the
City of Albuquerque.
Martin J. Chávez, Mayor

